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Claims

1. A method of verifying the accuracy or authenticity of alphanumeric magnetic data on a document, wherein:

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(a) the configuration of a pictorial or graphic magnetic reference image in the document is made visible by bringing movable particulate magnetic material into proximity therewith such that the particulate magnetic material takes up a distribution corresponding to the magnetic field of the reference image; and

15 (b) the magnetic image configuration thus revealed is compared with the reference image to identify any significant disconformity suggesting past exposure of the document to a magnetic field capable of altering said magnetic data or images.

20 2. A method as claimed in claim 1, in which the document also carries visible information.

25 3. A method as claimed in either claim 1 or claim 2, in which the document carries a layer of magnetic material which has a coercivity which is substantially uniform across its area.

30 4. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, in which the document comprises a pair of laminated outer sheets between which is a magnetic layer comprising

magnetically-activatable particles in a binder matrix, the outer sheet having sufficient opacity to mask the appearance of the magnetic layer.

5 5. A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said outer sheets are of natural or synthetic paper.

6. A method as claimed in either claim 4 or claim 5, wherein the magnetic layer is formed by a coating on the 10 inwardly facing surface of one or both of the outer sheets, or by a laminating adhesive which is applied as or just before the two outer sheets are brought together in a laminating press or similar equipment.

15 7. A method as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6, in which at least one outer sheet carries a pigment/binder coat on its inward facing surface.

20 8. A method as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 7, at least one of the outer sheets being provided on its outward facing surface with a coating which comprises either microcapsules containing a solution of at least one chromogenic material, or dispersed droplets containing at least one chromogenic material in a 25 pressure-rupturable matrix, or a colour developer composition, or both microcapsules containing at least one chromogenic material and also a colour developer.

30 9. A method of storing alphanumeric magnetic data on a document and subsequently confirming its authenticity, which comprises storing a pictorial or graphic magnetic reference image on the document; writing said alphanumeric magnetic data to the document; and subsequently verifying the accuracy or authenticity of

said alphanumeric magnetic data by a method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8.

10. A document or other sheet product suitable for
5 verification by a method as claimed in any one of claims
1 to 11 which comprises magnetic material which has a
coercivity which is substantially uniform across its
area, and which carries a pictorial or graphic magnetic
reference image in addition to alphanumeric magnetic
10 data.

11. A document or other sheet product suitable for
verification by a method as claimed in any one of claims
1 to 8 which comprises a pair of laminated outer sheets
15 between which is a magnetic layer comprising
magnetically-activatable particles in a binder matrix,
the outer sheet having sufficient opacity to mask the
appearance of the magnetic layer, and which carries a
pictorial or graphic magnetic reference image in addition
20 to alphanumeric magnetic data.

12. A document as claimed in either claim 10 or claim
11, having characteristics as specified in any one of
claims 2, 3, and 5 to 8.